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JEWISH HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF ENGLAND

CELEBRATION OF THE 250TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
WHITEHALL CONFERENCE





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The Jewish Historical Society
of England.

Celebration

of the

250th Anniversary

of the

Whitehall Conference,

1655-1905.



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The design on the front cover is a facsimile of the trademark of Menasseh ben Israel's printing press at Amsterdam.

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The Whitehall Conference.

The Whitehall Conference was convened by Oliver Cromwell and the Council of State in November, 1655, to consider Menasseh ben Israel's petition, in which were set forth categorically the several "graces and favours" by which it was proposed that the Re-admission of the Jews into England should be effected. The Conference met on four occasions, December 4th, 7th, 12th, and 18th, 1655. Cromwell himself presided, and laid down the programme of the proceedings in two questions :

1. Whether it be lawful to receive the Jews ?
2. If it be lawful, then upon what terms is it meet to receive them ?

On the first question, the two judges present, Glynne and Steele, both expressed the opinion that "there was no law which forbid the Jews' return into England." The Conference broke up without arriving at any conclusion on the second question. But the Protector subsequently gave permission to the Jews to celebrate Public Worship and to acquire a burial ground in London. The Whitehall Conference which decided that "there was no law which

forbad the Jews' return into England," was a notable gathering. The statesmen present were the most eminent on the active list of the time, and included HENRY LAWRENCE, the Lord President of the Council. The law was represented by Sir JOHN GLYNNE, Chief Justice of the Upper Bench, and WILLIAM STEELE, Chief Baron of the Exchequer. On the religious side the Conference was particularly strong. Sixteen theologians and divines, the flower of Puritan piety and learning, with Dr. CUDWORTH at their head, responded to Cromwell's invitation. The Whitehall Conference was thus one of the most important events in the whole career of the Commonwealth, and forms one of the most significant incidents in the Jewish history of the seventeenth century. It marks an epoch in the struggle for Civil and Religious Liberty.

S.L.

The portrait of Menasseh ben Israel is from an Etching, by Rembrandt, in the British Museum. The signature is from a letter in the possession of Mr. E. N. Adler.

1604-1657.



el. Hākam Menasheh ben Israel

1599-1658.



^s
of absent friend
Oliver P.

The portrait of Oliver Cromwell is from a life-size version, in oils, at the National Portrait Gallery, of the famous miniature by Samuel Cooper.

The Photo is by Emery Walker.

The Signature is from the Lansdowne Manuscript in the British Museum.

To His Highnesse & Luer Lord Protector of The
Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, & the Dominions thereof
Humbly sheweth The Humble Petition of The Hebrews at Present
Residing in this city of London whose names are Underwritten

That Acknowledging The Manyfold favours and Protection of His Highnesse hath bin pleased
to graunt Us in order that wee may with security meete privately in our particular houses
to our deuotions, And being desirous to be favoured more, by His Highnesse, wee pray with all
Humblenesse, that the best measures which may be, such Protection may be graunted Us in
Writing as shall bee may therein meete at our said private deuotions in our particular
houses without feare of molestation either to our persons, families or Estates, nor desired
Being to Live Peaceably under His Highnesse Government, And being wee as all mortall soules
alike Humbly pray His Highnesse to graunt Us licence that those which may be of our nation
may be buried in such place out of the city, as wee shall thinke convenient with the Proprietors
Lease, in whose shod this place shall be, and see wee shall as well in our life tymes as at our death
& highly favoured by His Highnesse for whose long life and Prosperity wee shall continually pray
to the allmighty God &c



Messias Congeract
David de Seabard
Abraham Isaac Haria
Abraham Congeract
Jacob de Laurens
Abraham Congeract
Isak Congeract

Mr. doo refer this Petition
to the Consideration of a Council.

March 24th 1655

Facsimile of the Petition of the Crypto-Jews
to Cromwell, March 24th, 1655-6, from the original in
the Record Office.

The Jewish Historical Society of England.

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Arms of Oliver Cromwell.

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